

REMARKS

INTRODUCTION

In accordance with the foregoing, claim 16 has been amended. Claims 16-18, 24 and 26-31 are pending in the application.

CLAIM REJECTIONS – 112

Claims 16-18 were rejected under 35 USC 112, second paragraph, as being indefinite. Appropriate correction has been made to claim 16 in accordance with the Examiner's suggestions. Withdrawal of the foregoing rejection is requested.

CLAIM REJECTIONS – 102

Claims 24 and 26-31 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) as being anticipated by Kashimura (US 4,772,007) (hereinafter "Kashimura").

Kashimura discloses a cut sheet holding a feeding apparatus. In Kashimura, a separating pawl 224 cooperable with the paper supply rollers 205 to separate cut sheets one by one from the uppermost layer is formed on the fore end of each of the separating pawl members 221 and 223. An ear 225 extending inwardly and engageable with the intermediate plate 207 is formed on the rear end portion of each of the separating pawl members 221 and 223 so that when the intermediate plate 207 is depressed, the separating pawls 224 and 224 are upwardly pivoted in response thereto. Kashimura, 8:35-8:44 and Figure 14.

In Kashimura, reference numeral 226 designates a bundle of loaded cut sheets. An end surface cam 227 is formed on the boss portion of the lever 211 so that when the lever 211 is pivoted clockwise, the release arm 216 can be pivoted about a support shaft 215 in the clockwise direction and the side keeping member 218 can be moved away from the side edge of the cut sheets against the force of the spring 217. That is, by operating the lever 211, the intermediate plate 207 can be depressed and the front cover 204 can be opened and at the same time, the side keeping member 218 can be retracted. Kashimura, 8:45-8:55 and Figures 13-16.

Claims 24 and 26-31

Independent claim 24 recites: "...wherein the first and second finger devices move independently from each other." In contrast to claim 24, Kashimura does not discuss this feature of claim 24.

In the "Response to Arguments" section of the Office Action, the Examiner noted that the two separating pawl members 221 and 223 of Kashimura are not connected together and the movement of one of the separating pawl members (221, 223) does not result in the movement of the other separating pawl member. As such, the Examiner states that the separating pawls 224 and 224, respectively connected to separating pawl members 221 and 223, also move independently of each other. To the contrary, Kashimura specifically discusses that when the intermediate plate 207 is depressed, the separating pawls 224 and 224 are upwardly pivoted in response thereto in column 8, line 43. As such, it is respectfully submitted that, as shown in Figures 14 and 15 of Kashimura, the intermediate plate 207 is the link between the separating pawl members 221 and 223. Since the separating pawls 224 and 224 do not move independently of each other, Kashimura does not anticipate claim 24.

Claims 26-31 are dependent on claim 24, and are therefore believed to allowable for the foregoing reasons.

Withdrawal of the foregoing rejection is requested.

CLAIM REJECTIONS – 103

Claims 16-18, 24 and 26-31 were rejected under 35 USC 103(a) as being unpatentable over applicant's admitted prior art in view of Stemmler (US 4,768,042) (hereinafter "Stemmler").

Stemmler discusses an adjustable size sensing sheet cassette. In Stemmler, the cassette comprises a box-like configuration with the sheet holding cavity in the center surrounded by walls 34. A sheet stack supply platform 35 is urged upwardly by spring means so that the sheet supply is raised above the height of the forward wall 34 at the front of the cassette. A fixed side edge sheet guide 31 and movable side edge sheet guide 28 each have arms 36 pivotally mounted to the rear thereof about pivot points 37, 38 with corner snubbers 40 on the other end of the arms. These snubbers are arranged to ride on the corners of a stack of sheets inhibiting the forward motion of the corners of the sheets when the sheet is fed in the forward position.

Since the vertical range of the snubber arms 36 is inhibited by stop member 39. Stemmler, 6:54-7:3 and Figure 1.

Claims 16-18, 24 and 26-32

Independent claims 16 and 24 recite: "...wherein the first and second finger devices move independently from each other." In contrast to claims 16 and 24, neither the applicant's admitted prior art nor Stemmler discuss first and second finger devices moving independently of each other. As stated in the Office Action, the applicant's admitted prior art does not discuss a second finger device. Stemmler discusses a fixed side edge sheet guide 31 and movable side edge sheet guide 28. Each guide 28, 31 has arms 36 pivotally mounted to the rear thereof about pivot points 37, 38 with corner snubbers 40 on the other end of the arms corresponding to the first and second finger devices recited in claims 16 and 24. However, Stemmler does not cure the deficiency in the applicant's admitted prior art of not discussing that the finger devices move independently from each other. By contrast, in Stemmler, a stack of sheets to be placed in the cassette against the fixed side edge sheet guide 31 with the leading edge of the sheets under the snubbers 40. The movable side edge sheet guide 28 and rear edge sheet guide 29, the slidable width and length bottom plates 50 and 49, cam slots 51 and 52, and the locating pins 53 and 54 move in conjunction with each other according to the positions of the arm ends 45 and 44 as shown in figure 1 of Stemmler. As such, it is respectfully submitted that as neither the applicant's prior art nor the snubbers 40 of Stemmler show the technical feature of claims 16 and 24 where first and second finger devices move independently of each other and claims 16 and 24 are not obvious over the cited prior art.

Claims 17, 18 and 26-31 are dependent on claims 16 and 24, respectively, and are therefore believed to allowable for the foregoing reasons.

Withdrawal of the foregoing rejection is requested.

CONCLUSION

There being no further outstanding objections or rejections, it is submitted that the application is in condition for allowance. An early action to that effect is courteously solicited.

Finally, if there are any formal matters remaining after this response, the Examiner is requested to telephone the undersigned to attend to these matters.

If there are any additional fees associated with filing of this Amendment, please charge the same to our Deposit Account No. 19-3935.

Respectfully submitted,

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Date: Sept 12, 2006

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